

**HANDOUT 3.3 — SELECTING A FACILITATOR**

There are times when you may have to select someone else to facilitate a meeting. It may be a meeting for your own office or organization or one that you have been asked to facilitate but cannot or should not accept. This may happen when you are involved in the situation personally or professionally (e.g., it directly involves your office), or you have a relationship with one of the parties involved (personal or professional).

Let's consider, for a moment, how each of the following positive characteristics of a good facilitator might contribute to a successful meeting and constructive decision-making process.

**CONFIDENCE**

Select a facilitator that participants will trust and believe. The facilitator should be confident and competent in his or her abilities. The audience should be confident and comfortable with the facilitator. It is important that all parties trust the facilitator to serve in a neutral capacity with regard to the process – even if he/she is employed by an agency or organization that may have a stake or position in the situation.

**POSITIVE ATTITUDE**

The facilitator should be open-minded and expect the meeting(s) to be successful.

The facilitator must be able to give her or to the meeting(s). She or he must be able to confirm what takes place at the meeting(s).

**EFFECTIVE LISTENER**

his full attention to clarify and Although the facilitator does not have to be a subject expert on the content of the meeting, it is helpful if she or he is familiar with the terminology, concepts, and ideas related to the topic that will be discussed.

**COACHING ABILITY**

The facilitator should possess strong observational skills. She or he should be comfortable giving direction and providing feedback to participants, and be able to offer meaningful suggestions for improvement.

**ENTHUSIASM**

A good facilitator has visible energy and intensity, good movement, and a strong, pleasant voice. It should be obvious to participants that the facilitator wants to lead the meeting, and wants to make progress toward achieving the group's goals.

**ACTION ORIENTED**

The facilitator should be prepared to step in and take charge should the meeting begin to lag. A good facilitator is flexible so that she or he can keep a meeting moving at a good pace even if there are sudden changes in the direction that the group is going.

**ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS**

The facilitator must be able to maintain control of the session, stay on the agenda, focus on key points, and make effective use of the meeting space, time, and tools (e.g., presentation, supporting materials, documents, flip charts,

Source: Hinkey, L. and Engleby, L. (instructors/editors). 2002. Navigating in Rough Seas: Public Policy Issues and Conflict Management. NOAA Coastal Services Center. 52 p.

audio/visual equipment, computer, etc.).